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FOURTH COUNTRY PROGRAMME FOR THE COMOROS

Note by the Administrator

I. THE PREPARATORY PROCESS

1. The fourth country programme for the Comoros (1992-1996) is the result of a continuous economic policy dialogue about the adjustment and development needs of the economy. The consultations, which began during the mid-term review of the third country programme in June 1990, actively involved the Government of the Comoros, UNDP, the various organizations of the United Nations system and the representatives of the major donors. The programme coincided with the adoption of the Structural Adjustment Programme 1991-1993, prepared in close collaboration with UNDP. It takes into account the views expressed at the donor Round-Table Meeting held at Geneva in June 1991 and it reflects a strong consensus among the development partners based on common perceptions of development priorities and modalities.

2. The advisory note was based on a thorough analysis of the data relating to the strategy for recovering from the economic crisis, the findings and recommendations of the mid-term review of the third country programme and wide-ranging consultations with the principal donors and the United Nations agencies and in the Joint Consultative Group on Policy, in particular with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). An active effort to establish complementarities with the other partners was the focus of the programming exercise. The programming has also been enriched by the discussions held by the donors at the Round-Table Meeting (June 1990).

3. The areas of concentration and the strategy for UNDP cooperation were defined on the basis of the priorities selected by the government authorities (Ministry of Finance, Budget, Economy, Trade and Planning) and the guidelines

for cooperation provided by the United Nations (General Assembly resolution 44/211 and UNDP Governing Council decision 90/34). UNDP's comparative advantages in technical cooperation were also taken into account.

II. ANALYTICAL COMMENTARY ON THE COUNTRY PROGRAMME

4. An analysis of the country's development situation indicates that progress towards sustainable development will depend on the solutions applied to economic matters generally, as described in the documents of the Structural Adjustment Programme and reaffirmed by the Government at the donor Round-Table Meeting at Geneva in June 1991 (liberalization of external trade and private sector development, strengthening of macroeconomic management and strict management of public funds and institution of a realistic public investment programme (PIP) that accords priority to growth-oriented activities). It will also depend on the speedy establishment of a vitally needed effective environmental protection policy and a demonstration of concern for human development.

5. The programme covers four major areas of intervention: macroeconomic management capacity-building, private sector development, eco-agriculture and health. Those interventions will be supplemented by a framework information/communication programme intended to convey to target groups of the population certain key messages concerning environmental protection and conservation, family planning, the status of women, agricultural techniques, health, administrative decentralization and regionalization, etc.

6. In the first area of concentration, macroeconomic management capacity-building, the assistance requested from UNDP will strengthen management and planning capacity and administrative reform. UNDP support will be expanded by incorporating complementary funds from the Management Development Programme (MDP), the Fund for Aid and Cooperation of France (FAC), the World Bank and the European Economic Community/European Development Fund (EEC/FED). It will have the effect of placing the public sector on a sound footing and providing it with a flexible and effective management model, as well as a precise definition of functions. It will also strengthen capacities for project design, analysis and follow-up and, by reinforcing the dialogue with the donors, it will make possible an optimal mobilization of external assistance.

7. The second area of concentration, private sector development, will have as its immediate objectives the elaboration of legal and administrative rules conducive to the development of private commercial and industrial activities, the revitalization of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that are in economic trouble, the establishment of a dozen or so SMEs, enlargement of the base of entrepreneurs and generation of growth-oriented savings. A series of credit lines will be established by additional funding from the EEC, the Central Economic Cooperation Fund (CCCE), the African Development Bank (ADB), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF).

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8. The area of eco-agriculture will cover environmental protection and conservation, anti-erosion activities, rural development and the opening up of areas with high agricultural potential. The net effect of the programme should be a slowing followed by a halt in the process of soil degradation in conjunction with an increase in the peasants' cash income. In addition, UNDP will help the Government to prepare a national environment plan and assist in the institutional and technical reinforcement of the Environment Department established in 1990.

9. The last priority area, health. UNDP will assist the Government in its fight against AIDS and malaria by providing the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) with the physical equipment they need for their work and will help, in collaboration with other donors, to draw up a strategy for the selective and gradual withdrawal of UNDP assistance.

10. Moreover, a review of the areas of intervention in the light of the priority themes of the UNDP Governing Council decision 90/34 indicates that (i) certain activities are identical in substance with the themes of that decision (management capacity-building, environmental protection); (ii) a number of its themes are echoed strongly under certain area headings (anti-poverty and environmental protection activities under eco-agriculture, for example); (iii) other themes are threaded through activities described under other headings (TCDC, transfer of technology and anti-poverty measures under private sector development, for example); (iv) although no direct reference was made to them, it is obvious that concerns about human development permeate the activities in each area of intervention, whether those activities are the prerequisites for a climate favourable to human development or they constitute one of the driving forces of that development.

III. MANAGEMENT OF THE COUNTRY PROGRAMME

11. Primary emphasis is given, in implementing the country programme for the Comoros, to putting together in a coherent fashion clusters of projects or framework-programmes that meet the threefold requirement of promotion, coordination and complementarity of the assistance provided - the methodological basis for designing the programmes - and that they exhibit overall and sectoral coherence in the context of PAS while at the same time strengthening the Government's capacity to mobilize and coordinate external resources.

12. With regard to the requirements for project execution, the specific situation of the Comorian Administration is such that it would be preferable to effect the transfer of responsibility for project management in a gradual and selective manner. The executing agencies will be involved in the implementation of the country programme.

13. Control, evaluation and coordination of the activities of the fourth country programme will be performed in accordance with the methodology established by UNDP (progress reports, tripartite reviews, in-depth

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evaluations, annual reviews and mid-term reviews). That process will respect the contributions of the local channels of consultation with the Government and the other development partners of the Comoros mentioned in paragraph 2.

IV. RECOMMENDATION OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

14. This note demonstrates that the fourth country programme has been developed in accordance with the instructions contained in the advisory note in collaboration with the national authorities, and it reflects the priority development needs of the Comoros.

15. The Administrator recommends that the Governing Council approve the fourth country programme for the Comoros.
